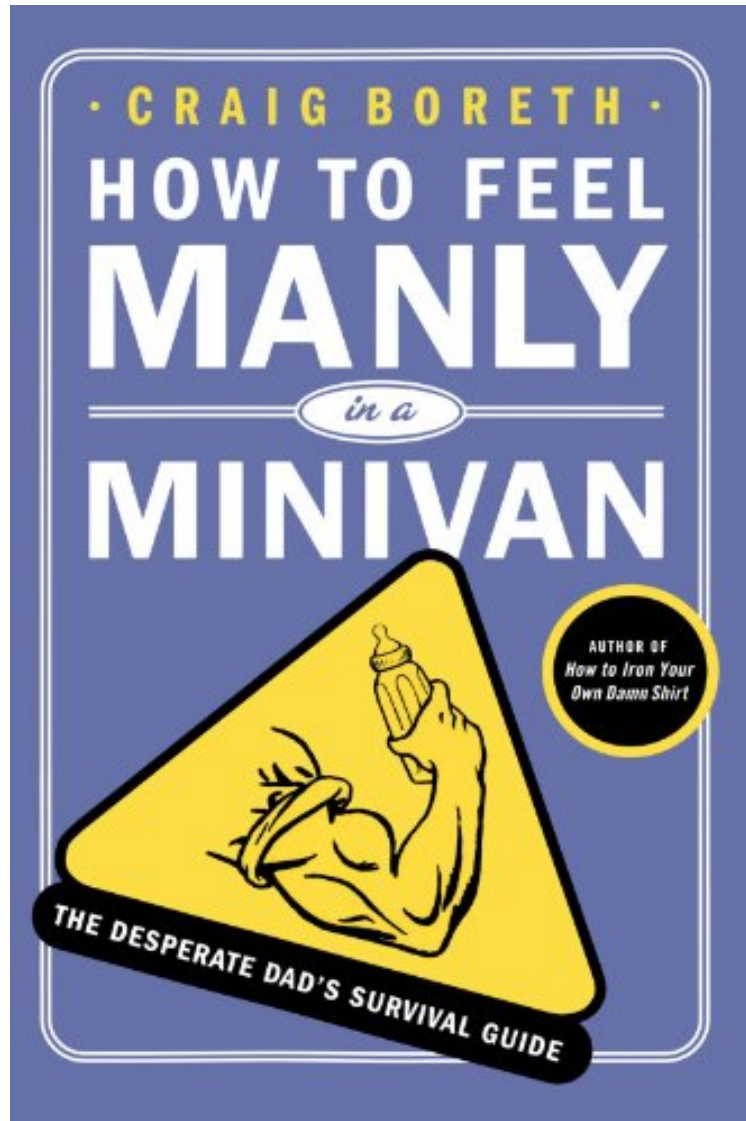


How to Feel Manly in a Minivan: The Desperate Dad's Survival Guide

Craig Boreth

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Craig Boreth : How to Feel Manly in a Minivan: The Desperate Dad's Survival Guide before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised How to Feel Manly in a Minivan: The Desperate Dad's Survival Guide:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy dukesGreat gift for new parents.1 of 1 people found the

following review helpful. Fun and Informative! By J. Soslow I got this book as a present for a recent dad and ended up keeping it for myself! I thought it was a cute idea and concept and would make a great present, but I didn't expect that it would end up in my permanent collection. Boreth offers a clever and highly entertaining look (from a man's perspective) at the whole pregnancy/infant care universe. What I really liked was that he doesn't just make a few jokes about the process of becoming a new father, he also gives you a lot of useful tips and techniques - strategies you might actually use...All in all, a fun and informative little book. 7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. The very best Craig Boreth writing yet.....By Oscar Boreth...and I should know. I have been reading Craig's books, essays and letters for more than thirty years. His essay in elementary school, "Who Is This Craig Boreth Kid?" is particularly memorable. All his books are "must reads," but I alone have been privileged to read just about everything he has ever written, and I feel very special. That's right - I'm his Dad, and as he says in his book, I did a damn fine job.

For every guy who has wondered how he could possibly become a dad while preserving any masculinity, sanity or dignity, this practical and hilarious guide will teach you HOW TO FEEL MANLY IN A MINIVAN...and many other essential self-preservation techniques for new dads. Men are ill equipped to face the challenges of fatherhood, but we've always made a noble effort: engaging in the meaningful sex, attending the breast-feeding class without giggling, and staying sober during the college planning. But the time has come for new dads to suffer no more. Veteran dad and author Craig Boreth sets out to smooth the path to paternity, showing desperate new dads: HOW TO CONVINCING YOURSELF THAT YOU'RE READY, from abandoning your entire existence to preparing for the biggest challenge of all: being useless. HOW TO GET FIT FOR FATHERHOOD, since that pudgy butterball will smack you down faster than a jilted stripper and make you sicker than Tijuana tap water. HOW TO maintain the illusion of control, from remaining conscious during delivery to telling pushy parents where to stick their unsolicited advice. HOW TO HAVE A NORMAL LIFE AGAIN, from getting that #@\$%! song out of your head to appreciating your wife the MILF. ...and much more in this entertaining, life-saving, fully illustrated guidebook that no new dad should be without.

About the Author CRAIG BORETH is the author of How to Iron to Your Own Damn Shirt and The Hemingway Cookbook. He lives in Santa Monica, CA, with his wife and young son. Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Preconceived Notions What to Expect Before She's Expecting Greetings from your future! I'm speaking to you now from that curious, often stupefying state commonly known as fatherhood. While I can hardly remember what my everyday life was like before the baby--for example, I've no idea how I occupied myself during the many hours every day that are now taken up with baby-related activities--I can clearly recall that I found the prospect of fatherhood intimidating as hell. But sitting here now, having been through it all and feeling reasonably comfortable and confident as a father, I'm reminded of a quote from the movie *The Man Who Wasn't There*: While you're in the maze, you go through it willy-nilly, turning where you think you have to turn, banging into the dead ends, one thing after another. But you get some distance on it, and all those twists and turns... why, they're the shape of your life. As you embark upon your great adventure toward fatherhood, marked most notably by what is in all likelihood your very first experience with meaningful sex (see "How to Have Sex for Procreation"), remember that while you may just be a rat in a maze with no clue where you are, sooner or later, one way or another, you'll reach the cheese. Happy trails. How to Abandon Your Entire Existence Everything changes.--Proverb of Fatherhood (ORIGIN twentieth century American: disgruntled dads) Most guys aren't big on change. Given the choice, they'd probably prefer a full body wax to changing even one insignificant part of their lives. The prospect of everything changing sends many guys off to a quiet place and, ironically, the fetal position. Fatherhood, of course, represents just such a comprehensive transformation. They say that ignorance is bliss, but for a reasonably content guy facing the unknown perils of fatherhood, ignorance is terrifying. He imagines a future awash in dirty diapers, sleepless nights, and soul-crushing responsibilities, all leading eventually to the sweet release of senility. It's a pretty bleak picture indeed, and one that most guys can't imagine themselves surviving with any sense of dignity. But face it, your life is always changing, and you've always adjusted. Remember when you first left for college? That was a pretty significant shift in your life, and at the time I'll bet you felt really out of sorts (at least I hope you did, and you weren't one of those cool kids who adjusted instantly and started bedding coeds before Parents' Weekend. Not that I'm jealous.). But you adjusted, and after a while you couldn't imagine going back to your old life. Of course, having a kid isn't exactly like heading off to college, except for the all-nighters, the vomiting, and the general bewilderment. Becoming a father is probably the most dramatic, instantaneous change in a man's life since he himself was born. It's a thoroughly transformative experience, like his wedding day, his first sexual experience, and his first trip to a Panamanian brothel all rolled into one. And every time someone tells you that "everything changes," you assume that the statement is filled with regret, and that all fathers wish they could go back to the days before it all changed. It's the belief that you will soon find yourself hopelessly nostalgic for what once was, regardless of how delusional that desire may be, that prompts so many men to fear the prospect of everything changing. One suggestion I have for guys who tremble at the prospect of fatherhood is to ask yourself if you would really go back to a previous time in your life. Let me qualify that: Would you go back and live it the same way again, without knowing what you know now, and therefore not getting laid a lot

more often than you did the first time? I think most guys are happy to keep moving forward, and becoming a father is just the latest in a long line of constant life changes. You'll get used to fatherhood just like you got used to everything else. Don't believe me? Here's an example that shows just how adaptable we humans can be. In 1896, Berkeley psychologist George Stratton published the findings from a study in which he wore mirror glasses that inverted his view of the world. For three weeks, his perception of the world was literally turned upside-down. At first he'd get nauseous whenever he moved his head, let alone when he tried (and failed) to walk. But after about a week, his eyes and brain adjusted so that he saw the world as "normal" again, and was able to function as he had without the glasses. That's pretty much what happens when you become a father. Your world is turned upside-down, you're queasy for a while, and just about every aspect of your life is different than it was before the baby. But quickly enough, you'll adjust and everything will seem normal once again. I'm not saying your life won't be crazy, frustrating, and exhausting, but it's still your life, and trust me, you'll get used to it. And not only will you get used to it, but before long you may actually grow to enjoy it, and you won't be willing to trade your life as a father for anything. I hope this book will help you get to that point just a little bit more quickly, because the sooner you get there, the easier the whole fatherhood thing becomes. And as we'll see, you can't fake it (nor should you); you really have to feel it. But for now, you've got some mental gymnastics to do if you're going to be able to think of yourself as a father without shrieking like a schoolgirl. So let's get started.

How to Reinforce the Delusion That You're Ready

Am I not a man? And is not a man stupid? I'm a man. So I married. Wife, children, house, everything. The full catastrophe.--Zorba (Anthony Quinn), *Zorba the Greek*

Before you and your wife even thought of having a baby, you probably looked at your friends with kids and thought about what their lives had become. In your mind, you saw them reduced to little more than groveling attendants pandering to the whims of those ungrateful little homunculi. Their lives seemed to consist of nothing more than dirty diapers, strained carrots, and slobbery plastic toys. Put yourself in their shoes and you won't be able to get your head in the oven fast enough. Let's just take a deep breath, turn off the gas, grab a beer, and assess the situation. You can't possibly be mature enough to be a father, right? You've got so much more living to do before settling down, right? Your wife may leave voice mail messages with nothing except her saying "tick-tock-tick-tock" over and over again, but you're just not ready. The fact is that nobody, male or female, is ever truly ready to have kids. And those who believe they're ready usually end up on the local news a few years down the road talking forthrightly about how little Bobby was such a sweet child, and how that pentagram burned into the neighbor's yard just couldn't be his handiwork. Our only job here is to get you as ready as you can be, since eventually you're going to wake up one day and find that it's too late, and you're already a father.

First, let's take a moment to figure out exactly why guys have such a tough time relating to babies. Most modern guys feel that they don't have much in common with babies. Men do not openly express emotions, whereas babies do nothing but that. For most men, crying has been completely expunged from their emotional vernacular. And with the exception of recent fraternity initiates and Howard Stern interns, most men haven't defiled a diaper in a long, long time. You can't possibly expect men to understand a creature that would refuse to eat or sleep whenever it has the chance. I mean, that's just crazy. Finally, most men feel that the closer they get to a baby, the more they lose control and risk embarrassment or irreversible feminization. In fact, a Canadian study actually found that men's testosterone levels dropped by as much as one-third after their babies were born, and the larger the decrease, the more protective the father. (On a barely related note, other Canadian researchers found that herring communicate by farting. If that doesn't prove we're all descended from a common ancestor, nothing does.) Let's face it: babies exist in a primarily feminine domain, and for good reason. The human male's natural state is no place for small children. (In my research for this book, though, I did discover many previously overlooked ways in which men can relate to babies. See "The Mothering Male.") Naturally some men will try to overcome their hesitancy about babies by spending time with a few. Big mistake. Playing dad with somebody else's kid is the single worst thing you can do when trying to convince yourself that you're ready to be a dad yourself. Maybe you'll babysit for a few hours or, worse yet, agree to take the kid for an entire day. Let me save you the trouble of actually embarking on this endeavor and tell you how it's going to turn out. You're going to end up a bitter, angry, thoroughly exhausted and dispirited shell of your former self. And you'll be even more convinced that you're not ready. Why is that? Simply put, because it's not your kid. Here's proof that dealing with your own baby versus someone else's makes all the difference: before I became a father, I was unsure about whether I'd be a good father, and I was thoroughly unenthusiastic about babies in general. I didn't mind spending time with babies, but given the choice I would rather they kept their distance. Now, by comparison, I consider myself a very competent and enthusiastic father, I'm completely comfortable taking care of my son, and I love spending time with him. I logically assumed that I had developed some new appreciation for babies in general. Nope. I still feel exactly the ...